

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 0452

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, LE
SUBJECT: ARAB-ISRAEL: VIEWS OF RASHID KARAME

1. PAID CALL ON SUNNI LEADER RASHID KARAME AT HIS BEIRUT HOME JANUARY 25. I FOUND LITTLE CHANGED SINCE I LAST SAW HIM 10 MONTHS AGO. HE SAID ARABS WERE ONLY ASKING FOR THEIR LEGITIMATE RIGHTS AND ISRAELIS WOULD HAVE TO REALIZE THIS AND MAKE NECESSARY CONCESSIONS. FAILURE OF SADAT MISSION WOULD HAVE DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES FOR ENTIRE AREA. DISAPPOINTMENT WOULD LEAD TO TOUGHENING AND RADICALIZING OF ATTITUDES. IT WAS INCUMBENT ON UNITED STATES TO TAKE CLEAR AND FIRM STAND IN SUPPORT OF PRINCIPLES ENUNCIATED BY PRESIDENT CARTER, WHO SHOULD EMULATE STAND TAKEN BY PRESIDENT EISENHOWER IN 1956. AND SUPPORT CREATION OF PALESTINIAN STATE AND RIGHT OF PALESTINIANS TO RETURN. THERE WAS ASSYMETRY BETWEEN PALESTINIAN AND ARAB RIGHTS. ISRAELIS WERE CLAIMING RIGHT TO STATE AND DENYING IT TO PALESTINIANS. THIS WAS UNJUST. PEACE COULD NOT BE BASED ON SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT.

2. ON INTERNAL SITUATION, HE SAID PRESIDENT SARKIS HAD
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MISSED HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY PROVIDED BY CAIRO AND RIYADH AGREEMENTS TO TURN OVER NEW LEAF AND BUILD LEBANON BASED ON JUSTICE AND RULE OF LAW. POLITICIANS WERE DOING BUSINESS AT THE SAME OLD STANDS, CARVING OUT THEIR LITTLE TERRITORIES AND BLOCKING PROGRESS THAT CONFLICTED WITH THEIR PERSONAL INTERESTS. WHILE HE THOUGHT NATIONAL CONSENSUS WAS A MUST FOR LEBANON, HE

DID NOT THINK GOL WAS GOING TO GET ONE IN THE WAY IT NOW
PROCEEDING. LEBANON NEEDED STRONG GOVERNMENT WHICH
WOULD IMPOSE ITSELF.

3. COMMENT: KARAME IS A MORE AUTHENTIC REPRESENTATIVE
OF ARAB, AS OPPOSED TO LEBANESE, OPINION THAN MOST OF OUR
GOVERNMENTAL CONTACTS AND AS SUCH TAKES A HARDER LINE ON
THE PALESTINE QUESTION. EVEN HE SAID THAT NO LEBANESE
WANTED PALESTINIANS RESETTLED HERE, BUT HE CONCLUDED THAT
LEBANESE MUST THEREFORE HELP THEM GET BACK THEIR HOMELAND.
HIS VIEWS IN THIS RESPECT HAVE NOT EVOLVED VERY FAR SINCE
1961, WHEN I FIRST MET HIM. IT IS NOTEWORTHY, HOWEVER, THAT HE
AGREES WITH FOUAD BOUTROS ON CONSEQUENCES OF A FAILURE BY
SADAT, I.E., THAT IT WILL LEAD TO INCREASE OF AREA TENSIONS.
PARKER

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